Colonial Photography Across Empires and Islands

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The Spanish-American War was one of the first wars to receive widespread media coverage, marking it, perhaps, as the first truly modern war. Although photography was used to document earlier wars, photography in the 1890s had become affordable and portable to the point that cameras were almost as ubiquitous on the battlefield as were rifles. In addition, halftone printing had just recently come to be used widely in magazines and newspapers, allowing for the inexpensive publication and mass circulation of photographed images. Photography opened up a new front in the battle for public opinion about the justifications for fighting wars. Thus, as one historian has noted: "In the ideological war between the US and Spain, the press and photography served as important instruments of international and national legitimation."[1]

If the beginning of US colonialism is marked by the acquisition of territories outside of the continental United States in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, then the history of that colonialism can only be understood as part of the history of photography, and the legitimation of US colonial ambition relied on the effective use of photography to promote US interests. Such was not the case with Spain, whose empire was established hundreds of years before photography's advent. Indeed, photography emerged at a time when Spain's empire was shrinking and Spain's hegemonic grip on international trade with its remaining overseas colonies was loosening. This meant that photography played a different role in legitimating Spanish colonialism than it did in the US context.

In recent years, a number of books—such as Juan Guardiola's *El Imaginario Colonial* (2006), and Otto van den Muijzenberg's *The Philippines Through European Lenses* (2008)—have appeared that seek to understand the role photography played in the late decades of Spanish rule in the Philippines. These books demonstrate that while imperialist ideologies are visible in such photography, colonial photography was, in many ways, less important in Spain than it was in the US. Indeed, van den

Muijzenberg suggests that photography had little relevance as propaganda in the Spanish empire: "After all has been said and done, it remains to be seen whether Spaniards bothered at all to make ideological use of the pictures that were taken, to a large measure, by non-Spanish foreigners. After having been active ideology builders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when massive Christianization accompanied the colonization of the archipelago, the late nineteenth-century Spaniards were probably less inclined to make propaganda for their colonial project than their American successors in the early twentieth century."[2] This isn't to say that Spanish-era colonial photography was devoid of ideological content, however. In fact, the evidence reveals that imperialist ideologies can be found in many such photographs. Nevertheless, there seem to be far fewer archives that reveal an active political use of photography by the Spanish colonial regime in the Philippines, than there are of the US colonial regime after 1898.

The Philippines Through European Lenses examines several albums of photographs collected over the span of four decades by P.K.A. Meerkamp van Embden, a businessman who also served as the Dutch consul to the Philippines. Van den Muijzenberg writes: "The pictures vary from family photos to professional studio and landscape photos. Thus, they not only provide us with a picture of the Philippines as it was seen through the eyes—or rather the lenses—of foreigners, but also give us aspects of expat ways of life."[3] As a collector of photographs, Meerkamp was "subject to the discourse of high colonialism." On the other hand, "his albums cannot be called a systematically built collection of images. Even less does [his archive] convey an image of racial superiority to be used to legitimize Spanish hegemony in the archipelago."[4]

Although van den Muijzenberg does not see an imperial agenda in Meerkamp's albums, Guardiola provides evidence from other collections that show at least some political uses of photography in the Spanish colonial regime. *El Imaginario Colonial,* described by Guardiola as "the first monographic exhibition on the introduction and development of photography in the Philippines during the nineteenth century,"[5] includes discussions of a variety of albums that were produced both in the Philippines and in Spain. One such album was made by an unknown photographer during Spain's efforts in the early 1890s to fortify its control of the southern island of Mindanao. According to Guardiola, "the intention of the series was undoubtedly to demonstrate the military consolidation of the region. It was in fact an act of propaganda and justification of the conflict to the Crown, for whom the report was addressed."[6]

Spain had good reason to be interested in consolidating its hold on its remaining colonial possessions in the final decades of the nineteenth century. In addition to other western powers eager to expand their colonial holdings, a growing nationalist movement in the Philippines was agitating for reform of the Spanish colonial government in the Philippines, if not yet fighting for outright independence. One response of the Spanish government was to sponsor an exposition of Filipino

culture in Madrid in 1887, "with the aim of increasing commercial and economic relations between the archipelago and the metropolis, but also with the objective of showing its indigenous population to the Spaniards,"[7] in the words of historian Luis Ángel Sánchez Gómez.

In his discussion of the photographs made of Filipinos during the exposition, Guardiola notes the "inevitable colonial character" of the exposition that sometimes conflicted with the desire of the Spanish authorities to promote "messages of culture and modernization" in the Philippines as a result of Spanish rule.[8] The exposition and the official photographs of that exposition were intended to legitimate Spanish colonialism in the Philippines at a time of increasing Philippine nationalism and international competition for trade with the Philippines. Despite the intended message of modernization at the exposition, Guardiola notes that the exposition's "'primitive' images were seen and interpreted as 'savage' by most of the public."[9] Sánchez Gómez echoes this point, noting that conservative (and some liberal) Spaniards believed that the lower-quality materials produced in the Philippines and displayed at the exposition were the "consequence of the inherent abilities of the Filipinos,"[10] a direct result of their supposed racial inferiority.

Similar arguments about the supposed inferiority of Filipinos and about the modernizing mission of the United States can be seen in much of the photography that emanated from that country's new colonies after 1898. Indeed, such ideas are even more vivid in US photography given that photography was more instrumental in framing American ideas about colonialism than it was in framing Spanish ideas about colonialism. In the aftermath of the war with Spain, American politicians, colonial administrators, and writers of all political stripes used photography to advance their arguments about US policies in the new colonies. These photographs circulated widely through articles in magazines such as *National Geographic*, through touring lanternslide lectures, through official government reports, and through travel books. Photography was a critical element of what Lanny Thompson calls "a comprehensive cultural process of establishing imperial hegemony; part of the practice of conceiving, creating, justifying, and governing a far-flung empire composed of an incredibly diverse group of islands spread across the Caribbean and Pacific."[11]

Photographs and their accompanying texts carried colonial messages that helped frame the ways that readers would imagine the colonies and the "mission" of the United States in those colonies. As Vicente Rafael writes: "One of the more visible legacies of the wars of 1898 was the explosion of photographic images, especially those of the lands and peoples that came under US rule. Lighter and more mobile cameras allowed the photographing of sites and populations at greater distances, bringing these up close to a consuming public curious to see the recent 'beneficiaries' of imperialist intervention."[12] Benito Vergara points out that writers and photographers working in the new US colonies were "burdened by the common sense of colonialism. . . . They had arrived carrying luggage and preconceptions. They were not mere foreign travelers, either; they were Americans, belonging to the

country that was the 'pre-destined master' of the colony. Their writings and photographs were therefore informed by the colonial narrative.'"[13]

While Thompson writes about the newly acquired colonies in general, Rafael and Vergara are interested primarily in colonial photography made by Americans in the Philippines. There is a good reason for this. Of all the US colonies, the Philippines received greater attention by far than any other. The perceived exoticness of the Philippines piqued the American interest. Moreover, the Philippines was widely regarded as the most problematic of the colonies, both because of the active and ongoing resistance of Filipinos to US imperialism, and because of the emphasis on a racialized difference between white Americans and Filipino natives that helped justify the brutal repression by the US of the Filipino struggle for independence.

It is important to note, however, that photographers were hard at work in other colonies as well. According to Thompson, "the U.S. Congress considered both Puerto Rico and the Philippines quite incapable of . . . self-government." Thus, in contrast to the "limited political independence" envisaged for Cuba, or the "territorial government" planned for Hawai'i, Puerto Rico and the Philippines were destined to become "imperial possessions" with no plans for either independence or assimilation into the US.[14] As part of the effort to legitimate the long-term holding of Puerto Rico, American colonial photography "helped 'to categorize, define, dominate, and sometimes invent' the Puerto Rican people as Other to mainstream American culture."[15] This "otherness" was not so much racial, however, as it was cultural, suggesting that with proper guidance, Puerto Rico might one day be put on the path to either independence or assimilation.

Thompson writes: "the principal photographic and textual representations in the illustrated books of the period . . . demonstrated an acute awareness of the exceptional diversity of the peoples under US dominion at the turn of the century."[16] While both Puerto Rico and the Philippines were viewed as incapable of self-government, there were important differences in how those two colonies were viewed by the US government. Those differences influenced what kinds of photographs were dominant in each colony. Thompson describes what he calls the "principle narrative" of the Philippines as "the evolution of diverse tribes." By contrast, the "principle narrative" of Puerto Rico was "the liberation of a poor, uneducated, and passive people."[17]

Although the different narratives led to differences in the dominant subject matter of American photography in the two colonies, those differences in subject matter mask a similarity of intent. That is, although the preferred subject matter of the colonial photographs in Puerto Rico and the Philippines may have been dissimilar, they shared the goal of showing the supposed deficiencies of the colonies, and the need for the US government to intervene in, and modernize each.

The theme of benevolent guidance and modernization was recurrent in the US. For example, in an effort to underscore what he saw at the difference between the US and European colonialism, President William McKinley explained that the

"Philippines are not ours to exploit, but to develop, to civilize, and to educate." Of course, the distinction between resource exploitation and economic development could be difficult to measure, blurring the supposed distinction between the legacy of Spanish colonialism and the nascent US colonial state. Visually, American photographers used their cameras to point out the underdeveloped state of the Philippine economy as well as to draw attention to the supposedly uncivilized nature of the country's inhabitants. In Puerto Rico, photographers emphasized the need to educate the colony's inhabitants, to further develop an already partially developed economy, and to underscore that Puerto Rico was already largely civilized, with only small remnants of its indigenous population.

One of the first books published that argued for US intervention in the Philippines was Dean Conant Worcester's *The Philippine Islands and Their People*. Published in October 1898, Worcester's book garnered widespread critical acclaim, took American readers by storm, and propelled its relatively young and unknown author to a career of fame, power, and fortune. Worcester's book went through four printings in its first five months.[18] Reviewers called the book "meritorious," "opportune," and "impartial," praised its timing as "'satisfy[ing] the general hunger for reliable and recent information concerning the hitherto unknown lands and peoples of which have just been put in control,'" and "'predicted that the book would become the standard work on the Philippines.'"[19] Worcester hit the speaking circuit, giving lectures about the Philippines in many different cities around the US. Newspapers published glowing accounts of those lectures, and magazine editors regularly approached him, requesting that he write articles tailored specifically for their readers.

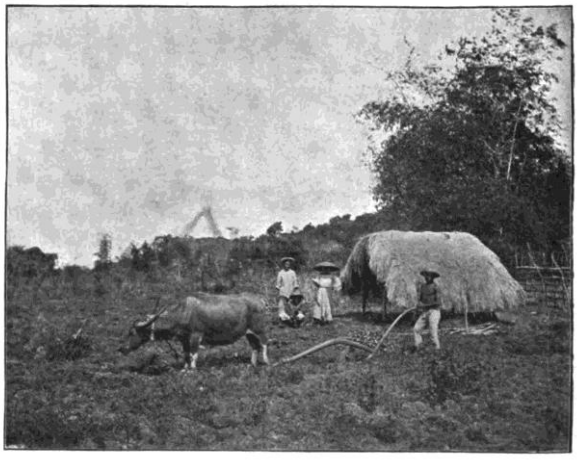
Worcester's book was published in the same month that commissioners from the United States and Spain met in Paris to hammer out the terms of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish American War and paved the way for the US to acquire its overseas colonies. Worcester, an Assistant Professor of Zoology at the University of Michigan, had made two trips to the Philippines on scientific expeditions in the 1880s and early 1890s, and he used those trips as the basis for his book. His book appeared at a moment when Americans were debating exactly what role the US would have in the Philippines and the other lands the US had wrested from Spanish control. Worcester, whose "Boone-like enthusiasm" Richard Drinnon describes in *Facing West*,[20] quickly became a key player in those debates, in which he made no effort to hide his conviction that the US should become an imperial power.

Within four months of his book's publication, Worcester secured himself a spot on the First Philippine Commission, charged by President McKinley to investigate conditions in the Philippines and to make recommendations about building up a civilian infrastructure and establishing local governments in the islands. Worcester, the only civilian on the commission, would also become the only carryover from the First to the Second Philippine Commission, and from 1901 to 1913 he served as the Secretary of the Interior for the US colonial regime in the

Philippines. Historian Alfred McCoy says that in his role as Secretary of the Interior, Worcester "shaped much of the regime's internal administration."[21]

In his role as photographer, Worcester also shaped much of the way that Americans thought about and literally envisioned the Philippines for many decades. His reach and impact exceeded that of any other American photographer working in the Philippines, and he published his photographs in a succession of books, articles, and government reports for the next fifteen years, culminating with the publication in 1914 of *The Philippines Past and Present*. His photographs were also used to illustrate the 1903 census of the Philippines, which Rafael says acted as "a visual complement to the statistical tables, a distinct but related way of seeing native subjects as objects of knowledge and reform."[22]

Because *The Philippine Islands and Their People* was published at the precise moment when the US began to exert colonial authority in the Philippines, its photographs can be seen as an important early effort to use photography to bolster a particular political argument about what the American colonial regime ought to do in the Philippines. Many of the themes in the book's photographs would remain dominant in colonial photography for years to come. For example, the photograph in Figure One, which appears on page 72 of Worcester's book, is captioned, "Primitive Agriculture—Luzon." As in much of Worcester's photography and writing—indeed, in much of the writing about the Philippines at that time—the photograph was presented to highlight the contrast between the rich potential for development in the Philippines, and the current underutilization of the island's natural resources. The lack of any kind of mechanized farm equipment, the implied limitations of using a single *carabao* to plow what appears to be hard-packed earth, and the thatch-roofed shelter underscore the inefficiency of the farm techniques employed in the Philippines. Indeed, without the presence of the plow and the caption, it would be difficult to identify this as a farm at all, suggesting that Filipinos were not making effective use of their land, which, in turn, was justification for the US to take possession of the islands.



PRIMITIVE AGRICULTURE — LUZON

Figure 1.
Reprinted from Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippine Islands and Their People* (1898).

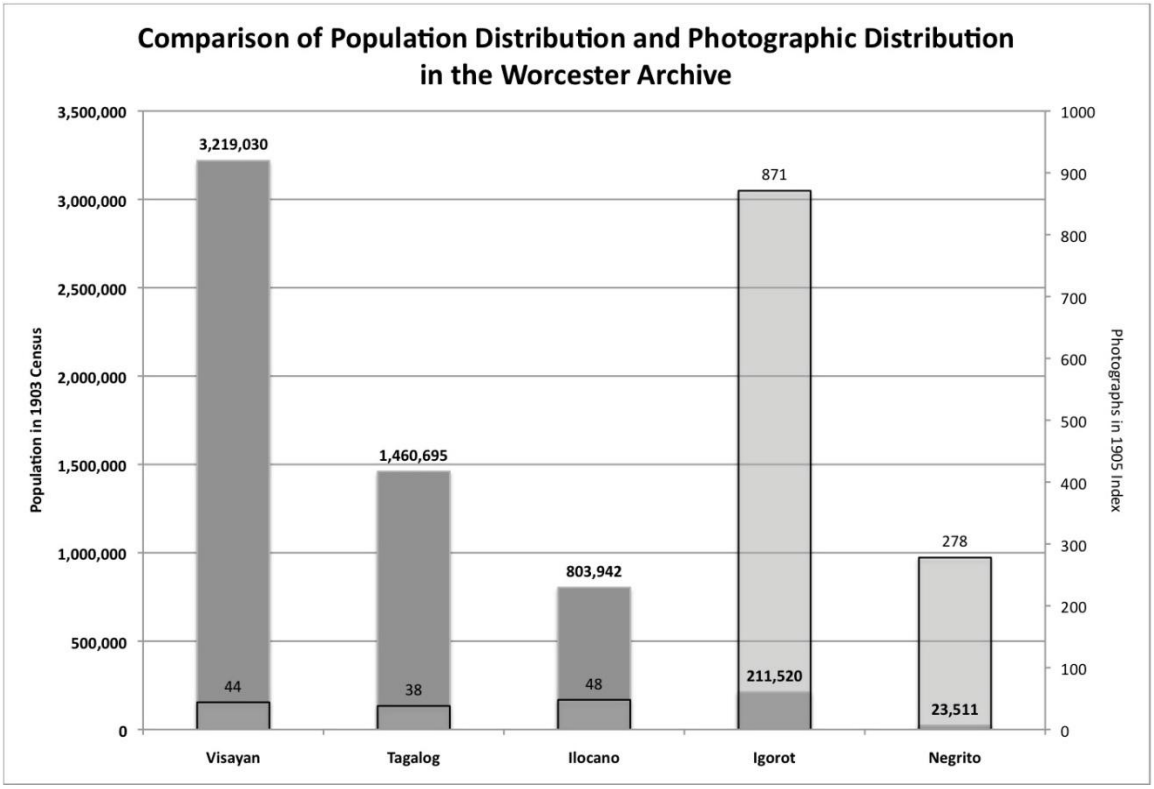
The bifurcation between savagery and civilization was at the heart of much of Worcester's work, and his archive largely excludes photographs of the educated middle-class in the Philippines. In this, Worcester's photography is similar to the Meerkamp collection, about which van den Muijzenberg writes: "The emerging Filipino and mestizo middle class (which would contradict racist theories) cannot be seen."[23] Indeed, during the Spanish colonial period, even those projects that intended to show development in the Philippines, messages of intractable savagery sometimes gained more traction, as mentioned above in regards to the 1887 Exposition in Madrid.

It is no exaggeration to say that Worcester's photographs served as official images of US imperialism. Worcester was a prolific photographer and amassed an archive of thousands of photographs over the course of his career. In addition to his own photographs, his archive includes photographs made by photographers he hired or worked with. For nearly twenty years, Worcester returned time and again to his archive of images in order to support his central argument—that the Philippines was not ready for independence, and that the presence of a large number of non-Christian Filipinos in particular required the strong hand of the US government in order to maintain stability and guidance toward some vaguely perceived future independence.

In *Exemplar of Americanism,* his biography of Worcester, Rodney Sullivan notes that non-Christian minority groups in the Philippines "constituted no more than 12 percent of the population yet they were the focus of more than half of Worcester's Philippine writings between October 1897 and October 1898."[24] This was a trend that would continue throughout Worcester's career. By focusing his camera and his writing on these groups, Worcester effectively rendered invisible the majority of the population—the Hispanicized, Christian Filipinos, many of whom were literate and were both eager and prepared to lead an independent nation. Emphasizing the non-Christian minority groups drew attention away from the impact of Spain's three hundred year history in the Philippines, and suggested that the Philippines were largely a wild and "savage" archipelago, and hardly a nation at all. As Rafael writes: "Wild peoples owed their 'barbarous' state to the historical failure of Spain to conquer them, a condition that a more vigorous US regime would remedy. Indeed, colonial accounts, especially Worcester's, are filled with glowing reports regarding the 'wild men' as ideal colonial subjects."[25]

Of the roughly five thousand photographs in the Worcester archive at the Newberry Library, more than 2700 have non-Christian Filipinos as their primary subject. Fewer than 200 photographs in the Worcester archive are of Christian Filipinos. Figure Two shows the disproportionate emphasis on groups such as Negritos and Igorots in a 1905 set of prints from Worcester's archive. Only forty-four photographs were made of Visayan groups, the largest single language group in the Philippines. By contrast, Igorots were photographed over 800 times, despite having a population less than 10% that of the Visayans.

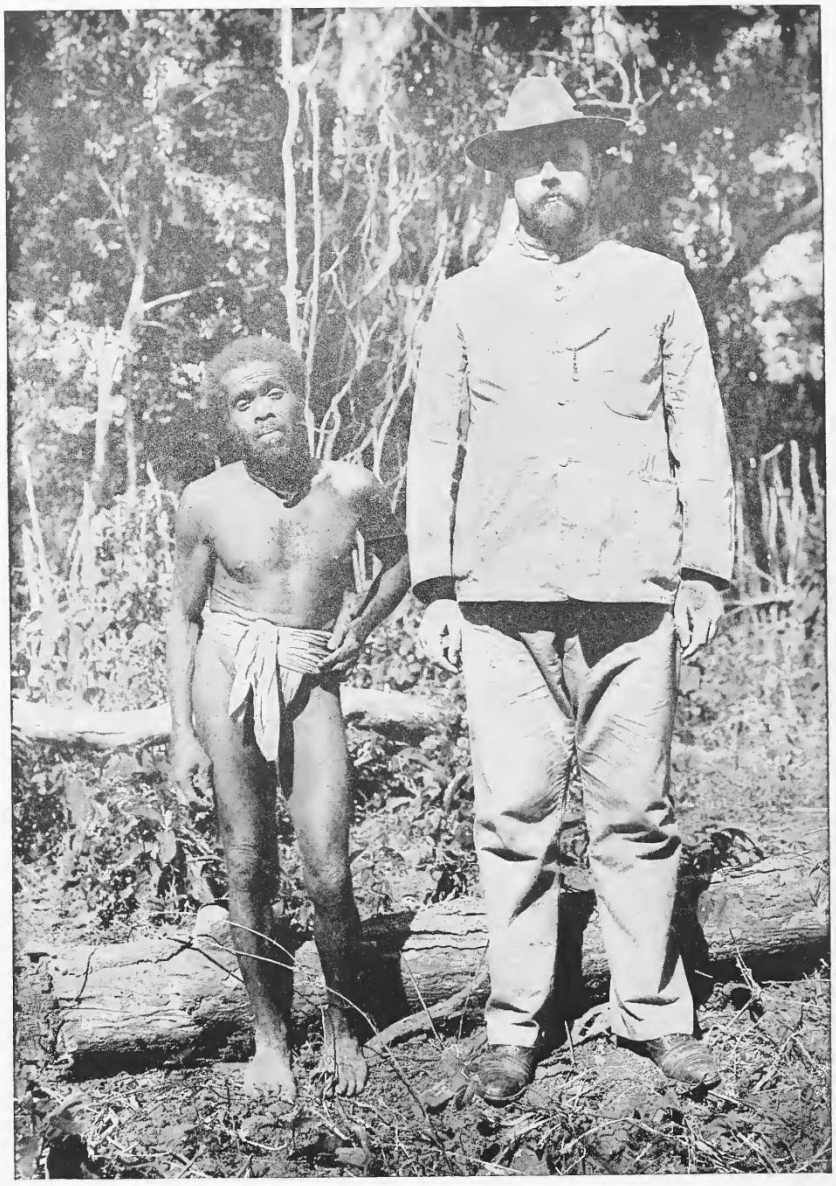
Figure 2. Population and representation in the colonial Philippines



As he neared the end of his public career and sought to reassert his central argument that the United States needed to maintain control of the Philippines, Worcester published a series of heavily illustrated articles in *National Geographic* that especially drew attention to the country's non-Christian minorities. The articles included "Field Sports Among the Wild Men of Northern Luzon," published in 1911, "Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon" in 1912, and "Non-Christian Peoples of the Philippine Islands" in 1913. By this point, *National Geographic* was well established as one of the most important and popular magazines for middle-class readers in the United States, existing, as it did, "on the boundary between science and pleasure."[26] Between 1905 and 1920, its circulation increased from 11,000 to 750,000, with its popularity resting in part on its widespread use of photographs—including those made by Worcester.

According to McCoy, "Worcester was the embodiment of American empire. He was also its most ardent advocate, believing firmly in racial evolution and telling his Michigan zoology classes that Filipino tribal 'savages' were the 'lowest of living men,' the first step in man's cultural evolution from 'the gorilla and the orang-utan." McCoy goes on to describe Worcester's uses of photography in the promotion of his political and scientific ideas: "To illustrate these theories, Worcester liked to pose—frame stiffly erect, body fully covered in colonial costume—towering above diminutive forest Negritos, their dark, wiry frames clad only in loincloths."[27] Figure

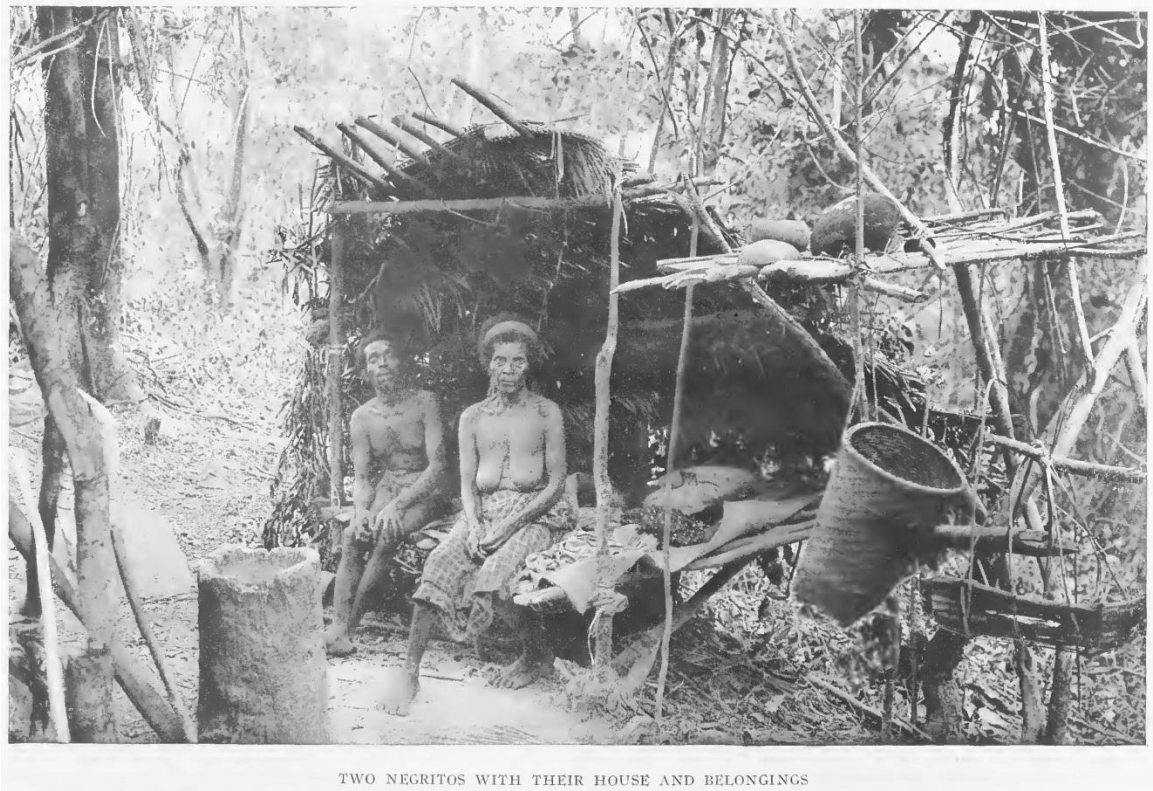
three shows one frequently reproduced photograph, taken in 1901. In it, Worcester stands as the literal embodiment of a masculine vision of American civilization. Next to him stands what Worcester describes as a "typical Negrito," the word "typical" referring both to the man's size and to his clothing. Worcester routinely described the Negritos as moving inevitably toward extinction due to their supposed unfitness for survival in the modern world. As he wrote in *The Philippine Islands and Their People*: "there are good reasons for believing them [i.e. the Negritos] to be incapable of civilization; but this is of little importance, as they are rapidly disappearing, and seem destined to speedy extinction."[28]



A TYPICAL NEGRITO MAN WITH SECRETARY WORCESTER
This photograph shows the relative size of the Negritos compared with a 6-foot American

Figure 3. Reprinted from *National Geographic*, September 1912.

Worcester was not alone in his mingled fascination with, and repulsion from the Negritos. Indeed, as Guardiola notes, through much of the nineteenth century, the Negritos were the "cultural group that most fascinated anthropologists,"[29] and photographs of Negritos appeared in many travel books and anthropological texts published by European scientists about human "types." However, unlike Worcester, who enjoyed being photographed next to Negritos, and almost always made his photographs outdoors (figure 4), the earlier photographs were often studio portraits of Negrito groups, or else engravings or etchings made from original photographs, modified to change the background and with figures added to increase the dramatic value of the image, or otherwise "manipulated and presented out of context."[30] Worcester, by contrast, preferred a more naturalistic style hinting at an ethnographic objectivity that could further underscore the perceived racial and cultural differences between his subjects and his readers.



TWO NEGRITOS WITH THEIR HOUSE AND BELONGINGS

Figure 4. Reprinted from *National Geographic*, September 1912.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scientists believed that Negritos were the most "primitive" people living in the Philippines. Judging from the elaborate taxonomy that he created for his photographs, Worcester shared that perception, assigning Negritos to the lowest position, then moving up through various animist groups that he felt represented increasing levels of civilization, then to the Muslim groups of the southern Philippines and then on to the Christian,

Hispanicized Filipinos, before finishing with mestizo groups. His taxonomic system reflected dominant scientific thinking in the Victorian and Progressive eras. As Anne Maxwell writes in her book, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions*: "No less than the botanical and zoological specimens that preoccupied Victorian scientists, colonized peoples were exposed to hierarchical systems of classification,"[31] in order to explain evolutionary theories of human origins.

Worcester's propagandistic use of photography developed through the course of his career, and is less pronounced in *The Philippine Islands and their People* than it is in his later writing. This reflects, in part, his developing awareness of the power he had to shape American perceptions of the Philippines, and his growing investment in the continuation of US control of the Philippines. As he wrote in the Preface to his first book: "At that time [i.e., the late 1880s and early 1890s] nothing could have seemed to us more improbable than that the information which we were gathering would ever be of use to our government, or of interest to the general public."[32] Despite this protestation, Worcester's Social Darwinist thinking and colonial advocacy are evident in both the book's text and its photographs.

Worcester believed that, aside from the Negritos, most of the "lower" groups could become at least partially civilized through contact with "higher" groups. Figure five shows a group of Mangyans who had come into contact with Tagalogs, resulting in the women now wearing cloth skirts. However, the long hair on the men, the women's bare breasts, and the fact that these people blend almost seamlessly into the chaotic vegetation behind them all serve to undermine the supposed salutary effects of contact with the Tagalogs. Indeed, Worcester believed that the Mangyans were almost as primitive as the Negritos.

Figure 5. "Group of Mangyans, Showing Effect of Contact with civilized Natives—Laguna de Naujan, Mindoro," reprinted from Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippine Islands and Their People* (1898).

More importantly, Worcester believed that even the most civilized of Filipinos were "utterly unfit for self-government."[33] If the Tagalogs were only able to bring marginal change to the Mangyans, certainly they couldn't be trusted to lead an independent nation. This argument echoed Guardiola's observations about public perceptions of the 1887 exposition in Madrid. Despite the economic and cultural integration of Spain and the Philippines brought about by four hundred years of colonialism, the received message of the exposition was that "an 'uncivilized' Philippines . . . still require[d] the 'tutelage' of the members of religious orders and a clearly colonial policy."[34]

While images of savagery and primitivism may have dominated colonial photography in the Philippines, Puerto Rico presented a different story. It wasn't simply because there were no "wild men" or "head hunters" in Puerto Rico that photographers in that colony found other subjects to emphasize the supposed inferiority of Puerto Rico; "wild men" had no place in the justifications for US colonialism there. Take, for example, the photograph in figure six, which stands in stark contrast to Worcester's photographs of Negritos or Mangyans. This small group of aboriginal Puerto Ricans were presented as "the last remnants of an extinct race" in José de Olivares's 1898 book *Our Islands and Their People*. Like the Mangyans, they were photographed outdoors. However, the women here are all dressed modestly, and their hair is styled in a way that American readers would have recognized. In all, there is no suggestion that they are any less primitive than any other Puerto Ricans.[35] Behind them, standing and looking at them, is a man who appears to be European. However, unlike Worcester in his photographs with the Negrito man, he is not used as a point of comparison. We see him only as an observer of the scene, not as a norm against which to measure the bodies of the women in the foreground.

OUR ISLANDS AND THEIR PEOPLE.

ornaments made of this metal in its virgin state, picked up in nuggets from the beds of mountain streams. But no gold mining has been carried on in the island for years, owing to a decree of the Spanish Government, which

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DESCENDANTS OF THE ABORIGINES.

These people are direct descendants of the original Indian inhabitants of Porto Rico, and although some of them have African blood in their veins, they are interesting as the last remnants of an extinct race.

Figure 6.
Reprinted from
Our Islands and Their People,
page 288.

In contrast to the Philippines, in which the US fought an extended—and brutal—counter-insurgency war against Filipino nationalists, there was much less resistance in Puerto Rico to the establishment of an American colonial regime. As John D. Perivolaris writes, in the immediate aftermath of the Spanish-American War, "the mass media of the time were enlisted in projecting the United States as a civilizing force that would lift its new possessions out of the backwardness of Spanish colonialism in a new phase of its Manifest Destiny. The United States was perceived in this way not only by Americans themselves but also initially by the majority of Puerto Ricans, including leading nationalists."[36] The dominant narrative of US colonialism in Puerto Rico was not the pacifying and civilizing of savage people, but the liberating and modernizing of a poor, but civilized island.

Because the takeover of Puerto Rico was largely peaceful, and because Puerto Rico did not have diverse tribal groups such as Negritos or Mangyans that could be racially juxtaposed to the supposed superiority of American Anglo-Saxons, Puerto Rico did not receive as much attention in the American press as did the Philippines. A search for articles about Puerto Rico (or Porto Rico) on the *National Geographic* online search engine returns only ten articles published between 1899 and 1915.[37] By contrast, a search for the Philippines returns nearly forty articles.

Most of the *National Geographic* articles about Puerto Rico in the early years of US colonialism were no more than one or two pages in length, and only one included photographs. That one happened to be the first, which appeared in March 1899. Titled, "Porto Rico," it was written by Robert T. Hill of the US Geological Survey. Hill pointed out to readers that the "preponderant population [of Puerto Rico] is of the white race," [38] and he did not include many photographs of people in his article. Instead, he focused on the island's geography and geology, providing detailed descriptions of the altitudes of various portions of Puerto Rico, the island's dimensions, and the island's flora. His photographs showed different topographical features of the island, such as its coastlines, rivers, and mountain farms, in a style that Perivolaris calls "pictorial lyricism."[39]

The lyricism of colonial photography in Puerto Rico can be seen in figure seven, which was published in *Our Island and Their People*. Captioned, "Farmers Returning from Market at Cayey, Porto Rico," the photograph shows a gently curving road along which ox-drawn carriages are drawn and individuals stand or walk. Trees line the road and mountains frame the scene from behind. Cayey appears as a small, peaceful town, and the scene of farmers returning from market would not be unfamiliar to many US readers. This photograph stands in nice contrast to Worcester's photograph of "primitive agriculture" seen in figure one, which emphasizes agricultural scarcity in the Philippines. The fact that the people in Cayey are returning from market tells viewers that their farming has progressed beyond the subsistence level, and the neat clothing on all of the individuals mark them as not impoverished. Farming may not yet be mechanized in Cayey, but the lyrically

somnambulant scene has an appeal that is largely absent from colonial photography in the Philippines.

Figure 7. "Farmers Returning from Market at Cayey, Porto Rico," reprinted from *Our Islands and Their People* (1898).

Hill's observation about the racial composition of Puerto Rico was echoed in a brief article published in June 1900. Titled, simply, "The First American Census of Porto Rico," the article's first lines read: "The surprising preponderance of the white race, the density of the population and evenness of its distribution throughout the island, the small number living in cities, [and] the insignificant percentage of the foreign born . . . are the main facts revealed by the census of Porto Rico."[40] For many American readers, knowing that Puerto Ricans were "white" was undoubtedly a relief, given both the physical proximity of Puerto Rico to the United States, and the distinctly non-white population of the Philippines. Moreover, the fact that population was evenly distributed throughout the island disallowed Americans from viewing Puerto Rico as an untamed frontier in the same way that the Philippines were routinely described.

The next article about Puerto Rico, appeared in December 1902, and was the transcript of an address and discussion of "Some of the Administrative and Industrial Problems of Porto Rico." According to William Willoughby, the colony's treasurer, the US policy toward Puerto Rico was "(1) to administer the island solely with a view to its own interest, and in no way as a source of revenue to the federal treasury, and (2) to endow the island with the largest measure of local self-government that it is fitted to enjoy."[41] Willoughby's statement was the standard refrain for US colonial administrators, and could just as easily have been made by Worcester in the Philippines. Like Worcester, Willoughby was not optimistic about a speedy move

toward self-government. In a reflection of Thompson's "principle narrative" about Puerto Rico, Willoughby believed that acquisition of an appropriate amount of "moral attainment" and an equally appropriate amount of education in the principles of a republican government could only be achieved over a long period of time.

The only other lengthy article in *National Geographic* dealing with Puerto Rico in these years was published in July 1907. Titled, "Some Recent Instances of National Altruism," the article was a reprint of a presentation given by William Howard Taft (then the Secretary or War) to a convention in St. Louis, Missouri on May 30 of that year. Taft discussed the activities of the US colonial regimes in Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. His talk opened with the claim "that there has never been on the part of any country a greater exhibition of pure altruism than that exhibited by the United States from the beginning of the Spanish War down to the present, toward the peoples who were immediately affected." Taft stated that the US acquired Puerto Rico "with the full consent of the people of that island."[42] He goes on, "Without our fostering benevolence, this island would be as unhappy and prostrate as are some of the neighboring British, French, Dutch, and Danish islands."[43]

The Philippines, on the other hand, was not acquired "with the full consent" of the Filipinos. To parry charges that the brutal repression of the Philippine independence movement was contrary to the country's republican ideals, Taft said that it would have been irresponsible of the US to allow Emilio Aguinaldo's revolutionary government to claim independence for the Philippines: "His attempt to carry on a government had been a failure. The failure would have been colossal, had he been given more responsibility. The only alternative was for us to take over the islands ourselves and administer the government until by gradual training in partial self-government the people might become so acquainted with the art and responsibilities of government that we could ultimately leave the islands."[44] In this passage, Taft's explanation of the US role in the Philippines echoed Willoughby's projections for the future of Puerto Rico.

The differences in how *National Geographic* presented the findings of the first censuses in the two colonies nicely correspond with the different uses of photography in each. The magazine published two articles highlighting the findings of the 1903 Philippine census, both of which were illustrated with photographs taken by Worcester. The first of these articles appeared in March 1904 and was written by Henry Gannett, the magazine's former editor, and the co-director of the Philippine census. In a reflection both of the "principle narrative" about the Philippines and of Worcester's photographic hierarchy of the Philippines, Gannett wrote: "All the larger islands are populated more or less fully, and mainly by little brown people of the Malay race. . . . These brown people, both civilized and uncivilized, are separated into many tribes, and they are of all grades of civilization, ranging from cultivated gentlemen educated in the universities of Europe, to the wildest of head-hunters and the most timid of tree dwellers."[45]

The photographs in both articles put Filipinos on display for American readers and illustrated the arguments put forth by Gannett and by the census as a whole. Gannett noted that the "civilized" Visayans and Tagalogs were the most numerous of all the Filipino groups, but the 1904 article included only one photograph of a Tagalog—a studio portrait of a young woman selling mangoes—and no photographs of Visayans. There are, however, numerous photographs of "uncivilized" Filipinos, such as Negritos, Igorots, and Tirurays, as well as Moro "dancing girls." Like many other official images of the US colonial regime in the Philippines, these photographs emphasize the differences between American readers and the colonized subjects of the Philippines, and helped promote the idea that the Philippines was primarily inhabited by exotic and uncivilized tribes.

By contrast, *National Geographic* published no photographs of either the land or the people of Puerto Rico in its coverage of the Puerto Rico census. Instead, it was content to note that the majority of Puerto Ricans were white. As noted above, *National Geographic*'s representations of Puerto Rico were primarily text-based; photography didn't have as active of a role in advancing the US colonial agenda in Puerto Rico as it had in the Philippines. However, anthropologist Jorge Duany has identified two collections—a set of ninety-eight stereograph views made between 1895 and 1905 and published by Underwood and Underwood, and the Helen Hamilton Gardener Photographic Collection, located at the National Museum of Natural History—that he says represent the moment "in which a colonial discourse crystallized" [46] in Puerto Rico. In these two archives he finds evidence for imperialist ideologies and colonial narratives that, while specific to Puerto Rico, echo the Philippine narrative of racial and cultural difference.

Duany does not overemphasize the similarities between American attitudes toward Puerto Rico and the Philippines. In fact, he specifically acknowledges that the perceived differences between Puerto Rico and the United States were "not so different as" the differences between the Philippines and the United States.[47] Neither collection Duany analyzes "characterizes Puerto Ricans as entirely different, savage, exotic, or erotic."[48] For example, Helen Hunt Gardener, who was married to a US Army officer who had served in Puerto Rico, and who made her 155 Puerto Rican photographs as "part of her comparative study of twenty countries of the Caribbean, the Pacific, Asia, Africa, and Europe,"[49] made "sympathetic portraits of Puerto Ricans" and suggested "that they could assimilate into American culture and thereby attain a higher standard of living and civilization."[50] Nevertheless, like Worcester in the Philippines, "Gardener often renders U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico highly visible."[51] In fact, "the Gardener Collection tends to legitimize American hegemony in Puerto Rico,"[52] by showing Puerto Ricans benefiting from US interventions on the island.

The purpose of the Underwood and Underwood collection, according to Duany, "was to furnish a visual inventory of picturesque scenes and locales for potential tourists and visitors."[53] As a highly successful company, its directors had a

clear understanding of what kinds of photographs would most appeal to their customers. Consequently, the company's archive of Puerto Rican images serves as a useful barometer of preferences and basic consumer expectations of Puerto Rico photographs. As anthropologist Rick VanderKnyff puts it: "Through stereographs, with their institutional emphasis on vicarious experience, the viewer was invited not only to witness, but to possess,"[54] a point that echoes Underwood and Underwood's own 1909 advertising claim: "To be within arm's reach of distant countries it is only necessary to be within arm's reach of the Underwood stereograph travel system."[55]

Underwood and Underwood understood that many of the consumers of its Puerto Rico stereographs were potential tourists or business investors looking to capitalize on the opportunities the new colony afforded. Consequently, its photographs presented the island as a calm, welcoming environment for Americans. Duany writes: "The image of happy natives, notwithstanding their adverse circumstances, is so common in this collection that it may be considered a trope of Puerto Rican conformity with the established order."[56] That Puerto Rico was viewed as a viable destination for Americans can also be seen in *Our Islands and Their People*, in which de Olivares writes: "Americans who have a few weeks of leisure, either in summer or winter, ought to avail themselves of the opportunity to become acquainted with this region, which seems to have been intended by nature as earth's richest garden spot."[57]

By contrast, the Philippines were presented as a colony wholly unsuitable for most Americans, particularly women and children, and not just because of the ongoing war there. In *The Philippine Islands and Their People,* Worcester explicitly warned against viewing the Philippines as a potential settler colony: "It is unfortunately true that the climate of the Philippines is especially severe in its effect on white women and children. It is very doubtful, in my judgment, if many successive generations of European or American children could be reared there."[58] In this, Worcester ignored the generations of Spanish *insulare* settlers in the Philippines, as well as numerous expatriated European families, such as P.K.A. Meerkamp van Embden.

Figure 8.
"Our Camp on the Baco River—Mindoro," reprinted from Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippine Islands and Their People* (1898).

Instead of presenting the Philippines as a tourist destination, Worcester viewed the islands in terms of the well-established frontier theme of Anglo-Saxon American men striving to carve a new civilization out of the wilds of Luzon and Mindanao. Take, for example figure eight, which shows the rough accommodations where he and Frank Bourns once stayed on the island of Mindoro. The text accompanying the photograph reads, "While not exactly commodious, it served our purpose, and for six weeks we had no other habitation. We slept in hammocks and sat on powder boxes. The lid of a trunk served us for a table. Our cooking-stove, constructed from a five-gallon kerosene tin, may be seen in the left foreground. The skull, at the corner of the house belonged to a bull buffalo which I had killed during our stay."[59]

One other significant difference between American colonial photography in Puerto Rico and the Philippines is that while bare-breasted Filipinas were a common subject, photographs in Puerto Rico showed women completely dressed and modestly posed. In one representative Underwood and Underwood photograph showing three young women in a small Puerto Rican town, the "women do not strike a provocative pose for the camera but smile as if caught by surprise or perhaps as a sign of modesty."[60] Instead, the women wear full-length dresses with long sleeves, reflecting the Spanish legacy of Puerto Rico and marking the women as civilized. Relatively few such photographs were published in articles and books about the Philippines, given the principle narrative of savagery that dominated representations of that colony.

The Underwood and Underwood collection, the Gardener collection, and Worcester's book all represented the early years of the US colonial regimes in the Philippines and Puerto Rico. William Boyce's heavily illustrated 1914 book, *United States Colonies and Dependencies*, depicts those colonies several years later. Published on the cusp of World War One, at a moment when the attention of many Americans shifted from the colonies to the war in Europe, Boyce's book can serve as a useful endpoint for this study. Like Gardener the decade before, Boyce, a Chicago newspaper publisher (and the founder of the Boy Scouts of America), traveled throughout the colonies in order to understand the conditions in each. He hired photographers to document his travels and the people he encountered along the way, and his writing is a mix of colorful anecdotes and economic and political prognostication.

Boyce believed in the righteousness of the American imperial agenda. His book's introduction proudly trumpets the colonial message, connecting US imperialism to the nation's frontier past: "Remember that every square foot of the soil that now constitutes our country and its colonies once was owned or claimed by some foreign power. That it all finally became free and the home of self-governing people has been the largest and most hope-inspiring of all modern facts."[61] From Boyce's perspective, the United States was clearly justified in supplanting Spain as the colonial power in both the Philippines and in Puerto Rico.

As had become the norm in the US media, Boyce gave much more attention to the Philippines than to Puerto Rico. Indeed, twenty-three of the book's sixty chapters were about the Philippines, compared with only five chapters for Puerto Rico. Although he felt that neither colony was yet ready for self-rule, Boyce followed the commonplace practice of presenting the Philippines as a far more exotic and dangerous place than Puerto Rico. Compared to the "savages" of the Philippines, Boyce writes that the majority of Puerto Ricans were landless "peons" upon the arrival of the US as a colonial power, and that "the Porto Rico peon is ordinarily a peaceful man. He never molests an American."[62] Minimizing the cultural difference between the US and Puerto Rico, Boyce noted that the "garments of both men and women do not differ from the summer clothing of the poorest Americans."[63]

The photographs included in the chapters on Puerto Rico visually supported Boyce's arguments about the island. There are few close up portraits in these chapters. Instead, Boyce tends to show scenes from towns and the countryside, including people as part of the local color. Almost all are dressed in western-style clothing—the men in long pants and long-sleeve shirts, typically wearing hats, and the women in long dresses. There are also photographs of schools full of industrious students and dedicated teachers, sugar and tobacco plantations, and a mix of American-style and Spanish-style architecture. The general sense is that Puerto Rico was a quiet, rural island whose population was poised to enter an American-style middle-class.

Boyce also noted the developments in the Philippines following the implementation of the US colonial regime, claiming: "We've done more in the Philippines in sixteen years than Spain did in three hundred."[64] However, like most Americans who wrote about the Philippines, he emphasized the exotic and alien aspects of the Philippines, with chapters titled, "The Dog-Eating Igorots," "The Head-Hunters of Luzon," and "Blood-Soaked Jolo." In both text and photographs, Boyce reinforced the perception first established by Worcester that the Philippines remained far too primitive and uncivilized for independence. Boyce's book was published at a time when the US government debated whether or not to grant independence to the Philippines, and he warned against such a move: "I predict that if given independence, the passing of a year or two would see them convulsed by revolutions, for the reason that the country consists of separate islands and the population of mixed, inharmonious races."[65]

After 1914, the attention of most Americans shifted from the country's colonies to the war raging in Europe. *National Geographic* published no articles about the Philippines from 1914 to 1930, and Puerto Rico remained absent from the magazine's pages until 1924. By then, however, the principle narratives for both colonies had become firmly entrenched in the minds of many Americans, narratives that were shaped by photography and were resistant to change in later decades. While the principle narratives of Puerto Rico and the Philippines may have been different, both narratives—and the photographs that accompanied them—were

effective in their common goal of legitimating the long term US control of both colonies in the name of modernization and Anglo-American racial and cultural superiority.

Notes

[1] John D. Perivolaris, "'Porto Rico': The View from *National Geographic*, 1899–1924," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 84:2 (2007): 198.

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[3] van den Muijzenberg, 3.

[4] van den Muijzenberg, 11.

[5] Juan Guardiola, *El Imaginario Colonial: Fotografía en Filipinas durante el periodo español, 1860–1890* (Barcelona: Casa Asia, 2006), 210.

[6] Guardiola, 219.

[7] Sánchez Gómez, Luis Ángel, "Indigenous Art at the Philippine Exposition of 1887," *Journal of the History of Collections* 14:2 (2002): 283.

[8] Guardiola, 223.

[9] Guardiola, 223.

[10] Sánchez Gómez, 283.

[11] Lanny Thompson, "Representation and Rule in the Imperial Archipelago: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawai'i, and Philippines Under U.S. Dominion," *American Studies Asia* 1:1 (2002): 4.

[12] Vicente L. Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 76.

[13] Vergara, 76.

[14] Thompson, 15.

[15] Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 90.

[16] Thompson, 6.

[17] Thompson, 33.

[18] Rodney J. Sullivan, *Exemplar of Americanism: The Philippine Career of Dean C. Worcester* (Ann Arbor: The Center of South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1991), 34.

[19] Sullivan, 34.

[20] Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian Hating and Empire Building* (New York: Schocken, 1990), 283.

[21] Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 98.

[22] Rafael, 37–38.

[23] van den Muijzenberg, 13.

[24] Sullivan, 44.

[25] Rafael, 33.

[26] Catherine A. Lutz and Jane L. Collins, *Reading National Geographic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 24.

[27] McCoy, 101.

[28] Worcester, 473.

[29] Guardiola, 220.

[30] Guardiola, 220–21.

[31] Anne Maxwell, *Colonial Photography and Exhibitions: Representations of the "Native" and the Making of European Identities* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999), 2.

[32] Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippine Islands and Their People* (New York: McMillan, 1898), x.

[33] Worcester, 482.

[34] Guardiola, 223.

[35] José de Olivares, *Our Islands and Their People as Seen with Camera and Pen*, volume 1 (New York: N.D. Thompson Publishing Co., 1899), 288.

[36] Perivolaris, 198.

[37]*National Geographic Magazine*, http://publicationsindex.nationalgeographic.com/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?Search_Arg=porto+rico&SL=None&Search_Code=GKEY^&PID=1ah4yLQ91wOCqL-xMddVu9xlSb&SEQ=20100712183502&CNT=100&HIST=1, accessed on November 16, 2010.

[38] Robert T. Hill, "Porto Rico," *The National Geographic Magazine*, March 1899 (Volume 10, No. 3), 93.

[39] Perivolaris, 202.

[40] "The First American Census of Porto Rico," *The National Geographic Magazine*, June 1900, 328.

[41] "Proceedings of the National Geographic Society," *The National Geographic Magazine*, December 1902, 468.

[42] William H. Taft, "Some Recent Instances of National Altruism," *The National Geographic Magazine*, July 1907 (Volume XVIII, No. 7), 433.

[43] Taft, 433–34.

[44] Taft, 434.

[45] Henry Gannett, "The Philippine Islands and Their People," *The National Geographic Magazine*, March 1904 (Vol. XV, No. 3), 103.

[46] Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island & in the United States*(Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2002), 90.

[47] Duany, 121.

[48] Duany 120.

[49] Duany, 107.

[50] Duany, 119.

[51] Duany 112.

[52] Duany 116.

[53] Duany, 94.

[54] Rick VanderKnyff, "Parlor Illusions: Stereoscopic Views of Sub-Saharan Africa," *African Arts* 40:3 (2007), 63.

[55] VanderKnyff, 50.

[56] Duany, 95.

[57] de Olivares, 374.

[58] Worcester, 67.

[59] Worcester, 396–97.

[60] Duany, 103.

[61] William D. Boyce, *United States Colonies and Dependencies* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1914), xi.

[62] Boyce, 424.

[63] Boyce, 427.

[64] Boyce, 238.

[65] Boyce, 403.